

GOOD NEIGHBOR ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

MONTHLY ROUND-UP

Volume 2, Number 2
April 2001

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Board News

Good Neighbor Environmental Board Meetings for 2001

- **July 25-26** - San Diego, California
- **October 10-11** - Laredo, Texas

Comment Letter to BECC/NADB

The Board has issued a letter to BECC/ NADB in response to its request for comments on potential pilot projects under its expanded mandate. The text of the letter follows:

Mr. Donald Hobbs, BECC General Counsel, P.O. Box 221648, El Paso, TX 79913

Dear Mr. Hobbs,

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board thanks you once again for the opportunity to provide ideas on potential pilot projects in the new areas included under BECC and NADB's expanded mandate.

We discussed your invitation to comment during our recent meeting in Yuma, Arizona, on March 21-22. After careful deliberation, the Board decided that it was not currently in a position to submit specific pilot project recommendations without first gaining a clearer understanding of the following issues:

- We understand that the primary purpose of the mandate expansion is to develop environmental projects in which NADB financing at non-subsidized rates would be viable. Given that there already is a waiting list for project development funding, how would funding for these pilot projects be handled? What, if any, would the effects be on the existing pool?
- Will technical assistance to communities be provided in-house? If not, would BECC/NADB be willing to reimburse other technical assistance entities or provide funds to communities (as it does in some other cases) to obtain their own assistance?
- Will expanded mandate activities be carried out with the same transparency as prescribed for other portions of the program? We presume the answer is yes, but please confirm.
- How would pilot project funding and operations relate to the 501(c)(3) North American Development Foundation? The Board would greatly appreciate a response to its questions. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Judith M. Espinosa, Chair

cc Raul Rodriguez, NADB Managing Director

Comment Letter on Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF)

Good Neighbor also recently sent a letter to the President and Congress on BEIF. The NADB has contacted the Chair of Good Neighbor to request copies of the letter to make it available at an upcoming Congressional briefing on BEIF. The text of the letter follows:

March 28, 2001

The President, The Vice-President, Speaker of the House
The White House, Washington, DC 20500

RE: Budget Appropriation for the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF)

Dear Mr. President:

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board strongly urges the appropriation of a specific budget line item of \$100 million for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) in the federal budget for fiscal year 2002.

U.S./Mexico Border Environmental Infrastructure Needs and the BEIF Program

The Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) is an EPA-funded North American Development Bank (NADB) program. This program is designed to make environmental infrastructure projects affordable for communities throughout the U.S.-Mexico border region by combining grant funds provided by EPA with loans or guaranties for projects that would otherwise be financially unfeasible. Environmental infrastructure projects considered for funding by the NADB must be certified by its sister organization, the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC). Both of these institutions were created under NAFTA specifically to help address the environmental infrastructure deficiencies in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

Originally envisioned as a seven-year program with \$100 million appropriated in grants each year, the BEIF has been considerably reduced in the past three years. For fiscal year 1999, the BEIF allocation was \$75 million. It was \$50 million for fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

This decrease in EPA BEIF appropriations is in direct contrast to the increase in funding needs for environmental infrastructure: NADB projections for environmental infrastructure funding needs were \$192.1 million for 1999, \$213.6 million for 2000 and \$739.2 for years 2001-2003. Of these overall projections, NADB estimates that for the period covering 1999-2003, grant funding needs from BEIF will exceed \$560 million, and at least another \$500 million for the period covering 2004-2009, with total project costs estimated to exceed \$1 billion during this second five-year period. In summary, these needs far exceed the amount of funds that have been allocated for the BEIF program in recent years.

Role of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board

The Good Neighborhood Environmental Board (GNEB) is a federal advisory committee created to advise the President and the Congress about environmental and infrastructure issues and needs within the states contiguous to Mexico. It was created by the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Act of 1992 (EAIA) (7 U.S. Code Section 5404). Board membership includes representatives from federal agencies; the state governments of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas; the business sector; the tribal sector; and community development, academic, health, environmental, and other non-governmental entities. A Presidential Executive Order delegates implementation authority to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The GNEB operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and meets three times annually at locations along the U.S./Mexico border.

Conclusion

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board strongly recommends that a specific budget line item of \$100 million be appropriated for the EPA BEIF grant program. It puts forward this recommendation in its capacity as advisor to the President and Congress on environmental and infrastructure needs for the U.S./Mexico border region.

The Board urges this step be taken because of the diminishing funding sources allocated to address these needs. Though such an appropriation would not address all of the environmental infrastructure needs, it certainly would assist in mitigating continued degradation of the environmental conditions within the region. These improvements are vital to the quality-of-life conditions that promote sustainable development in an increasing populated region that is the heart of economic trade between the U.S. and Mexico.

The Board appreciates the opportunity to offer this funding recommendation and looks forward to a response. GNEB welcomes ongoing dialogue on the implementation process for the appropriation of funds for the BEIF program and related issues.

Respectfully yours,
Judith Espinosa, Chair

cc: Christine Todd-Whitman, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
John Howard, President's Council on Environmental Quality
Senators, States of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas
Chair, Border Governors' Association
Chair, Western Governor's Association
Chair, Hispanic Congressional Caucus
Chair, Border Trade Alliance Environment Committee
Chair and Members, Congressional Border Caucus
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, & Independent Agencies
Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, & Independent Agencies

Member News

Board member Bess Metcalf, U.S. Director of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Coalition, has resigned from the Board due to the numerous demands on her schedule. We wish Bess all the best and will miss her contributions to the work of the Board, especially her perspective as someone working on the critical issue of water from within a grassroots binational NGO coalition.

May Conference Calls

(*call-in numbers will be provided by separate e-mail)

- **Air Quality Group** - May 8, 4 p.m. Eastern, 3 Central, 2 Mountain, and noon Pacific Time.
- **HazMat Group** - May 14, 2 p.m. Eastern, 1 Central, noon Mountain, and 11 a.m. Pacific Time.
- **Wastewater Group** - May 8, noon Eastern, 11 a.m. Central, 10 Mountain, and 9 Pacific Time.
- **Water Resources Group** - May 10, noon Eastern, 11 a.m. Central, 10 Mountain, and 9 Pacific Time.
- **San Diego Mtg. Planning Committee Call** - May 17, 2 p.m. Eastern, 1 Central, noon Mountain, 11 a.m. Pacific.

Good Neighbor in the News

The latest issue of the EPA Region 9 Border XXI Report newsletter contains a full-page article about Good Neighbor. We appreciate the coverage.

Next Good Neighbor Meeting: San Diego

Good Neighbor's next meeting will be in San Diego at the Horton Grand Hotel on July 25-26. The meeting will end at noon on the 26th and an optional field trip for members will take place that afternoon. The theme is water issues, including both water resources and wastewater. Planning committee members include Jennifer Kraus, Ed Ranger, Nancy Sutley, and her assistant Alex Rodarte.

EPA Appointments Update
a section of the Good Neighbor Environmental
Board
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President Bush has nominated a former EPA Assistant Administrator, Linda J. Fisher, to be the Agency's Deputy Administrator. He also has nominated a 20-year career EPA employee, Stephen L. Johnson, to be Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, and a former White House official, Jeffrey R. Holmstead, to be Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation. The U.S. Senate must confirm the nominees.

The President also announced his intention to nominate G. Tracy Mehan to be Assistant Administrator for Water.

Border Region News
a section of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board
April 2001 Round-Up

****Note: The items in the section below have been cut-and-pasted and compiled from other documents. Please check a primary source to ensure complete accuracy. Web sites may have to be re-entered.****

Grants available - The University of Arizona Border PACT Grants Program 2001 has announced its second round of seed grants. Deadline: June 1. See www.borderpact.org

Grants website - A one-stop shop website for federal grants is available at www.cfda.gov/federalcommons/

New Institute - The University of Arizona and Morris K. Udall Foundation have established the Native Nations Institute at the Udall Center. Contact: mbegay@u.arizona.edu

Private Sector - A total of 50 Baja California companies are being certified as "Industria Limpia" or "Clean Industry" under a program that recognizes companies that appropriately handle toxic waste.

Reports - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has published a report called "Mexico-U.S. Migration: a Shared Responsibility." The report calls for a new agenda including jointly building a viable border region and says the mandate and institutional culture of NADB must shift toward the Bank becoming a development institution. See www.ceip.org/files/projects/IMP/IMP_Home.ASP.

-Texas Center for Policy Studies has published a new report called "BECC/NADBANK: Achieving their Environmental Mandate." The Center also has published a Conchos report, hazardous waste report, and Laguna Madre report. See www.texascenter.org

- CEC has published a draft report on lessons learned in the implementation of the Citizen Submission Process of the CEC. Deadline for comments: May 15th. See www.cec.org

- Global Development and Environment Institute has released "A Survey of Sustainable Development: Social and Economic Dimensions." See www.gdae.org

- EPA's FY 2000 Annual Report is out. Under Goal 6, Reducing Cross-Border Environmental Risks - U.S./Mexico, the report says that the President's Budget requests a total of \$74.8 million for water infrastructure projects along the U.S./Mexico border. See www.epa.gov/ocfo

- SCERP has published its second monograph, "Water Issues along the U.S.-Mexican Border." See

www.scerp.org

- Worldwatch Institute's latest report, State of the World 2001, says global environmental trends are at a dangerous crossroads and says recruiting industry is key. See www.worldwatch.org

Transportation Study Funding - The World Bank and Banobras, the Mexican federal government's development bank, have approved US\$90,000 for Mexicali to study its roads and transportation needs.

TRI - EPA has released the 1999 TRI Data. See www.epa.gov/tri

Border Issues Events Calendar

a section of the Good Neighbor Environmental
Board April 2001 Round-Up

Notes: Event listings below have been drawn from other lists and may have changed. Please check a primary source for more details. Web sites may have to be re-entered. Events specific to border region are in bold.

- May 8-10** U.S.-Mexico Border RC&D Coalition meeting, El Paso, TX.
May 9 EPA El Paso Border Office monthly forum, El Paso, TX.
May 10 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House, San Diego, CA.
May 12-19 National River Cleanup Week. Contact: rivercleanup@aol.com
May 15-17 VI Congreso Nacional de Ciencias Ambientales, Pachuca, Hidalgo
May 19-20 NWF & Planning and Coconservation League Foundation symposium, Smart Growth for Californians and Wildlife, San Diego, CA. See www.nwf.org/smartgrowth/sdsymp/html
May 20-22 World Agricultural Forum-Congress, St. Louis, Missouri. See www.worldagforum.org/congress2001/index.html
May 20-23 National Watershed Coalition's conference on Small Watershed Programs, Richmond, VA Contact: jvpeterson@erols.com
May 29-Jun 1 US-Mexico Border Health Association Annual Meeting, Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 7-8 19th Binational Border Governors' Conference.
June 13 EPA El Paso Border Office monthly forum, El Paso, TX.
June 17-21 AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition, Washington, D.C. See www.awwa.org/ace2001/index.htm
June 20 CEC Working Group on Sound Management of Chemicals meeting, Tucson, AZ. Contact: mpepin@ccemtl.org
June 20-21 BECC meeting, Washington, D.C.
June 27-July 1 National Watershed Forum, Arlington, VA. See www.merid.org/watershed/index.html
June 27-29 CEC Annual Council Session, Guadalajara, Mexico.
June 30- July 3 National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference, Atlanta, GA
July 2- 4 7th Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference on the Environment, San Francisco, CA
July 25-26 Good Neighbor Environmental Board meeting, San Diego, CA. See www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb-page.htm
July 30-Aug 2 Nature Conservancy conference, "Managing River Flows for Biodiversity," Fort Collins, CO. See www.freshwaters.org/conference

August 8 EPA El Paso Border Office monthly forum, El Paso, TX.
Aug 11-14 WGA Annual Meeting, Coeur d'Alene
 Aug 27-31 2001 ASCE Wetlands Engineering & River Restoration Conference, Reno, NV. See www.asce.org/conferences/wetlands2001
 Aug 27-28 9th International Joint Meeting on New Technologies in Water and Wastewater Treatment, Monterrey, N.L., Mexico. Contact: smaac@infosel.com
 Aug 27-30 4th Inter-Regional Conference on Environment-Water: Competitive Uses and Conservation Strategies for Water and Natural Resources, Fortaleza, Brazil. See www.funarbe.org.br/ircew
 Sept 8-11 Children's Environmental Health II: Global Forum for Action Conference, Washington, D.C.
 Sept 20-21 CEC SMOC and JPAC meetings, Tucson, AZ
Sept 13 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House, San Diego, CA.
 Sept 17-21 Advanced Water Pollution Control Seminar, Univ. of TX, Austin. See www.lifelong.engr.utexas.edu
Oct 10-11 Good Neighbor Environmental Board meeting, Laredo, Texas. See www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb-page.htm
Oct 11 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House, San Diego, CA.
Oct 16 - 19 SCERP 2001 Annual Technical Conference: Sustainable Development in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region, Mexicali, B.C. See www.scerp.org
Oct 20 Dia del Rio (River Day), organized by the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Coalition.
 Oct 29-31 Stream, Riparian, and Floodplain Restoration Workshop, Albuquerque, NM.
Nov 8 EPA San Diego Border Office Open House, San Diego, CA.
 Dec 11-13 Building Native Nations II Conference: Environment, Natural Resources, and Governance, Tucson, AZ. See www.udallcenter.arizona.edu

2002
 Feb 23-27 Watershed 2002, Fort Lauderdale, FL. See www.wef.org

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